

# Record

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BAPTISTS

## Another record for Performing Arts Fest

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

The 2007 edition of the Christian Performing Arts Festival on February 23-24 at Broadmoor Church, Madison — already one of the largest performing arts festivals in the Southern Baptist Convention — set an attendance record for the second year in a row, according to the festival's director.

"There were over 700 people at this year's festival. The attendance has been unbelievable for the past two years," said Myrna Gregory of Brandon, who has directed the last four festivals for the sponsoring Discipleship and Family Ministry (DFM) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

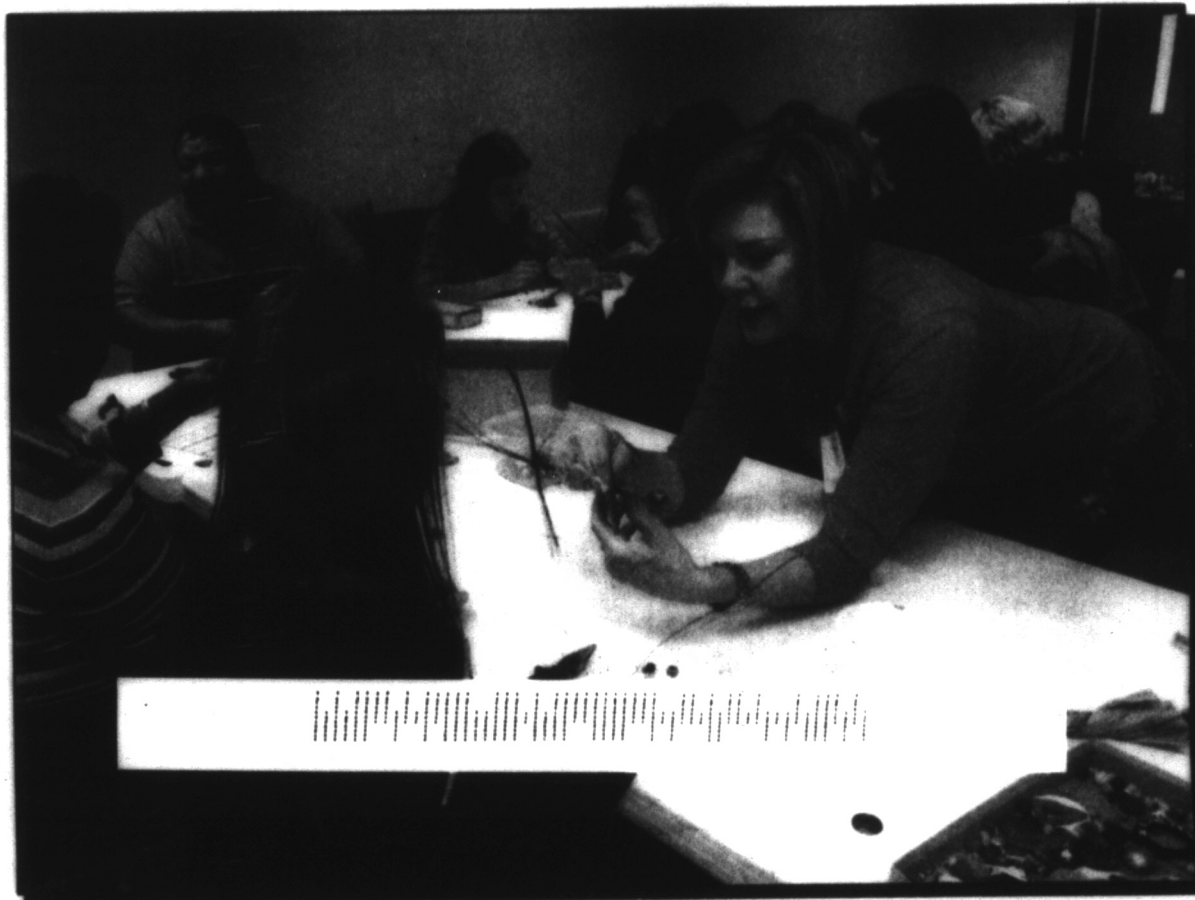
"The numbers were running between 500-600, but attendance has really picked up in the last two years. Most of the people who attend are Mississippi Baptists, but we are also drawing people from out of state and from other denominations," said Gregory, a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon.

Gregory has been involved with the festival for over 15 years, and served as director several years ago before accepting the job again in 2004.

"The numbers are great, the enthusiasm is high, and we're just having a great time watching this ministry grow from year to year," she said.

The featured speakers this year were Joe Bruce and his wife Fondee, ventriloquists from Dallas.

Gregory attributed the popularity of the Mississippi Baptist event in part to the high quality and diversity of classes offered, and also to the skill of the instructors. "We



A LITTLE TWIST — Robin Howard (right) provides guidance to a student in her Wire Crosses craft/recreation class at the 2007 Christian Performing Arts Festival on February 24 at Broadmoor Church, Madison. Attendance at this year's festival set another record, with over 700 people participating. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

bring in faculty from all over the country who are recognized as the best in their fields," she pointed out.

Marcus Peagler, DFM director for the convention board, agreed. "There were unique, creative worship experiences with clowning, puppetry, drama, black light performances, a special track for student pastors, a recreation track with games, crafts, and sports ministry classes," he said.

Gregory pointed out that Mississippi Baptists take their Christian performing arts seriously. "Last November, three of our state committee members attended the national performing arts festival at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. They were the committee members who coordinate the drama, puppetry, and clowning segments of our festival."

Gregory expressed her appreciation to the worship and facilities staff at Broadmoor Church for hosting the festival, as well as the many volunteers who helped make the event a success. Drama teams from Broadmoor and Mississippi College in Clinton filled crucial roles at the festival, she said.

"Special thanks to Myrna Gregory for coordinating the event," Peagler said, "along with the committee members who worked with her: Martha Cannon, Bobby Everett, Perry Robbins, and Vicki Roberts."

The Christian Performing Arts Festival is funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. The 2008 festival will be held February 22-23 at First Church, Clinton. For more information, contact Peagler at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3283 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 283. E-mail: mpeagler@mbcb.org.



DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION — Jeremy Lucas (right) leads a drama class in interpreting the song, I Am, by Mark Shultz, at the 2007 Christian Performing Arts Festival on February 24 at Broadmoor Church, Madison. Mississippi Baptists conduct one of the largest and longest-running performing arts festivals in the Southern Baptist Convention. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



Christian Performing  
Arts Festival

February 23-24, 2007  
Broadmoor BC, Madison





## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# 'Lost Tomb of Jesus' falls flat

In less than two weeks, the highly anticipated Discovery Channel documentary *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* has imploded under the weight of faulty assumptions, pure Hollywood hype, and the hopeless quest to prove Jesus is not who He says He is.

Offered as proof that Jesus was buried in an ossuary (bone box) like any other mortal Jew of His day along with family members that allegedly included His mother Mary, wife Mary Magdalene, and son Judah, the *Lost Tomb of Jesus* stirred the usual pre-Easter news media questions about whether Jesus was truly the Son of God or just another messianic fraud.

Academy Award-winning film maker James Cameron lent his considerable talent to the production, which no doubt upped the documentary's credibility by quite a bit. The fact that the normally-solid Discovery Channel dedicated four million dollars to the film's production also generated confidence in the reliability of the "facts" presented during the show's airing on March 4.

Alas, *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* turned out to be merely the latest entry in a long history of poor scholarship, groundless speculation, and desperate grasping to try to convince us that the basis for the entirety of the Christian faith — the virgin birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ — didn't actually happen.

The film makers protest that they're just doing their jobs and that they are merely putting forth the physical evidence they have uncovered, but their altruism doesn't ring true.

From the beginning of the hype, there were questions about the film's trustworthiness. Archaeologists who worked at the tomb site after its discovery in 1980 dismissed the idea that anyone could conclude that Jesus of the Gospels was buried there.

"They just want to get money for it," said Amos Kloner, the Israeli archaeologist who was put in charge of the tomb by the government after its discovery.

"The fact that it's been ignored tells you something. It would be amusing if it didn't mislead so many people," said William Dever, professor emeritus at the University of Arizona and an expert in eastern archaeology.

Now the statistical probabilities of the tomb being that of Jesus of the Gospels, quoted in the documentary, are being called into question. University of Toronto statistician Andrey Feuerverger calculated there was only a one in 600 chance that the family names found on ossuaries in the tomb could be some family other than Jesus of the Gospels. The film makers used Feuerverger's conclusions as an important linchpin in the documentary.

On March 9, a column by Carl Bialik in the *Wall Street Journal* described Feuerverger's methodology as "questionable."

"Had the professor assumed the inscription could be for any Mary, a very common name then, it would be far less likely that Christ's family is in the tomb.

The mathematical finding would become 'statistically not significant,' Prof. Feuerverger tells me," Bailik wrote.

Furthermore, Feuerverger admits in the journal that his contractual obligations to the film makers set limits on peer review and how much detail he could discuss about the methodology he used to come up with the one in 600 figure. He also admits he was paid what he describes as a "nominal" fee for his participation in the film.

Feuerverger himself is apparently not comfortable with the way the film makers used his calculations. "There is a mismatch between how the media works and how academia works," he told Bailik.

Critics are springing up everywhere. "The filmmakers get around reasonable doubt with the twin pillars of cable documentaries: hokey costume drama re-enactments and state-of-the-art robotic cameras that see around corners and down dark holes," wrote Alessandra Stanley in a March 3 *New York Times* review.

"We're talking about moving all the pieces here to make for sensational television and frankly, that's why I think most Christians are going to take this without any seriousness at all," observed R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in an appearance on CNN's *Larry King Live* show.

Simply put, no one will ever be able to prove Jesus isn't who He says He is, because He is indeed who He says He is. That's not circular logic. That's a fact. That's the truth.

Case closed.

## Quick Facts: North American Mission Board

- Most North American Mission Board (NAMB) missions personnel are jointly funded with state Baptist conventions, associations and churches, and receive support from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO). The 2007 goal is \$57 million — 100% of which will directly support missionaries and their ministries.

- Total gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering in 2006 exceeded \$57 million. Since its inception, more than one billion dollars has been given through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

- NAMB's budget for 2007 is \$124 million; 44% of the budget comes from AAEO and 36% from the Cooperative Program.

- NAMB's primary responsibility is to assist Southern Baptist churches in reaching the United States, Canada and their territories with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The agency provides assistance to churches, associations and state conventions in church planting and evangelism, including soul-winning training, interfaith witness and church and community ministries.

- Three priority emphases of NAMB are sharing Christ, starting churches, and sending people.

- Headquartered in Alpharetta, Ga., NAMB was formed in 1997, and is the successor organization of the Home Mission Board (which began in 1845), the Brotherhood Commission, and Radio and Television Commissions.

- The 5,300 missionaries, 2,600 chaplains (serving in military, institutions such as prisons and hospitals, and in corporate settings), and hundreds of thousands of mission volunteers (e.g. World Changers, Mission Service Corps missionaries) are seeking to reach the estimated 248 million unbelievers in the United States, Canada, and their territories.

## Annie Armstrong Easter Offering®

**National Goal: \$57,000,000**

[www.AnnieArmstrong.com](http://www.AnnieArmstrong.com)



**NORTH AMERICAN  
MISSION BOARD**

- Southern Baptists have a goal of starting more than 2,000 churches each year.

- Church and community ministries such as Pregnancy Care Centers, literacy missions, Baptist center ministries, week day ministries, and immigration and hunger ministries result in more than 30,000 professions of faith each year.

- The Strategic Focus City (SFC) emphases for 2007 are Baltimore and San Diego. Since it began in 1998, NAMB's SFC emphasis has yielded more than 400 church plants and more than 55,000 volunteers in nine cities.

- All seven Southern Baptist seminaries, including the Canadian Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, have Nehemiah Project mission professors in place. Because of this partnership to mobilize new church

planters, almost 900 church planter interns have been appointed to serve in summer, semester, and full-time capacities.

- More than 25,000 youth and adults learned about mission involvement and ministry by participating in 93 World Changers and PowerPlant projects last year, leading 1,270 people to make decisions for Christ.

- More than 1,700 high school and college students answered God's call as summer, Sojourner, Innovator and semester missionaries last year, resulting in 1,016 professions of faith.

- More than 50,000 people are trained in Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, and NAMB works in partnership with Baptist state conventions to coordinate national disaster relief efforts.



# Laotians carry special ministry across U.S.

"The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering makes the thing that is impossible among us... possible."

It's profound and ironic that North American missionary Thira Siengsukon (pronounced See-eng'-su-kone') — Chinese by birth, Thai by culture, and for whom English is a second language — could so eloquently yet concisely utter just 14 words that so accurately reflect what the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is all about.

The 57-year-old Siengsukon, director of the Lao School of Ministry at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., is also an Asian missionary strategist and church planter for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists.

Siengsukon and wife Montira are two of more than 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. He's one of eight Southern Baptist missionaries highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer last week. The 2007 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$57 million, 100% of which is used for missionaries like the Siengsukons.

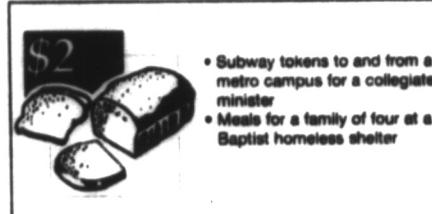
Born in Bangkok as the son of non-Christian, Chinese parents, Siengsukon was raised in the Thai culture, educated in Thai schools, and taught the Buddhist religion of his ancestors.

"When I joined an American missionary's youth program at a chapel near my house, I heard about Jesus and the Gospel for the first time," he said. "I compared Christian beliefs to the Buddhist beliefs taught to me as a child at my school and home. After three years, I surrendered to Christ, admitted I was a sinner, and Christ gave me a brand new life in Him."

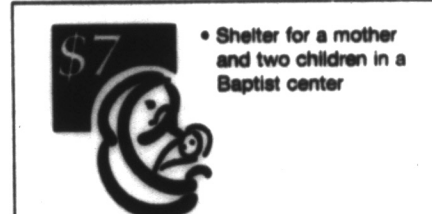
After graduating from Trinity College and Thailand Seminary in Bangkok, the Siengsukons came to the United States so Thira could



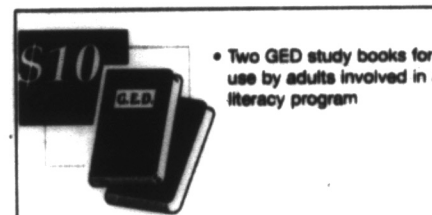
- Refrigerator magnets for advertising a new church
- Evangelistic tracts to be used in an evangelistic event, such as a sports clinic
- Soft drinks for students at a college snack bar, thus providing an opportunity to share the gospel with them
- Three meals for a homeless person



- Subway tokens to and from a metro campus for a collegiate minister
- Meals for a family of four at a Baptist homeless shelter



- Shelter for a mother and two children in a Baptist center



- Two GED study books for use by adults involved in a literacy program

continue his studies at Central Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

He and Montira soon developed a passion for planting churches and winning to Christ the estimated 169,000 Lao immigrants in America. He has served five years as the church planter and pastor of New Life Baptist Church, a Lao congregation in Olathe, Kan. — one of only 80 Lao churches in the entire Southern Baptist Convention.

Siengsukon then intended to return to Thailand, but God had other ideas.

"I couldn't return to Thailand because I couldn't find a Lao pastor to replace me. In the meantime, the Lord helped me see the struggles of most Lao congregations in the United States and the desperate need for biblical training for Lao pastors and church leaders," Siengsukon explained. "The Lord spoke to my heart, asking me, 'Why can't you train them?'"

In partnership with NAMB, the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, and the Midwestern Seminary, Siengsukon founded the Lao School of Ministry in Kansas City, Mo., in 1988.

"My ministry equips Lao-culture pastors and church leaders, who are God-called, with a strong biblical education and practical training to serve the Lord and proclaim the Gospel to Laotian and other people in the U.S.," Siengsukon said. "Our students are first-generation Christians who need basic biblical knowledge and background."

Although Siengsukon's school is headquartered at Midwestern Seminary, it's difficult for most Laotian pastors to leave their congregations across the United States and travel to the seminary for their training.



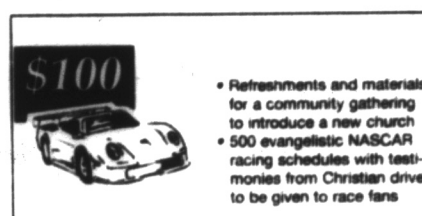
**TEACHERS, WITNESSES** — Thira Siengsukon and his wife Montira (seated) both teach at the Lao School of Ministry at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., which Thira founded in 1988. (NAMB photo by John K. Swain)

Most of the pastors cannot afford the expense, and their congregations cannot afford to do without them for the period of time required for their studies.

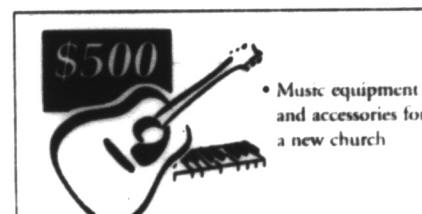
So instead of making the pastors and church leaders travel to them at the seminary in Missouri, Siengsukon takes the training to the Lao pastors. Twelve satellite training centers have been established — usually in existing churches — in Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Minnesota, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, and Vancouver, Canada. A thirteenth center will serve four congregations in Detroit and Toledo, Ohio.

Currently, some 100 students are participating in the 30-credit hour curriculum at their local sites. While Siengsukon makes the rounds to each teaching site on several weekends during the year, much of the coursework is done by correspondence and with local, qualified instructors who speak Lao.

Childhood sweethearts who've been married 31 years, Thira and Montira Siengsukon learned English early on. The parents of two sons and well-educated — Montira has a master's in education and Thira recently earned his doctorate at Midwestern Seminary — they



- Refreshments and materials for a community gathering to introduce a new church
- 500 evangelistic NASCAR racing schedules with testimonials from Christian drivers to be given to race fans



- Music equipment and accessories for a new church

both teach as instructors at the Lao School of Ministry.

They also must write all of the school's textbooks and course materials in Lao because English is a difficult second language to master for Laotian pastors, church leaders, and members, according to Siengsukon.

"I feel that God led me here and prepared me for this because of the educational background I have," Siengsukon said, adding that he and Montira have worked with Laotians for 24 years.

His greatest joy in his ministry is "seeing the Lao pastors and leaders, my students, succeed in their ministries and produce healthy, fruitful churches..."

## Looking back

### 10 years ago

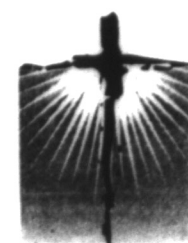
Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice signs legislation on March 17 to outlaw partial birth abortions in the state. Mississippi Baptists, many of whom worked for passage of the bill, applauded the new law.

### 20 years ago

Larry Baker may have only a six-month tenure as the head of the Christian Action Commission, according to the commissioners on the short end of a 16-13 vote to hire him. Criticism centered around the process by which Baker was nominated and his ethical views, especially on abortion.

### 30 years ago

According to Home Life magazine, "Rock and roll comes straight from the jungles. The tempo is the same heard in the jungle night as savages pound out their tom-tom rhythms."



MISSISSIPPI  
**BAPTISTS**

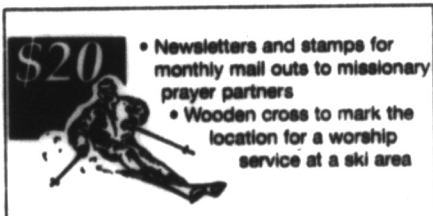
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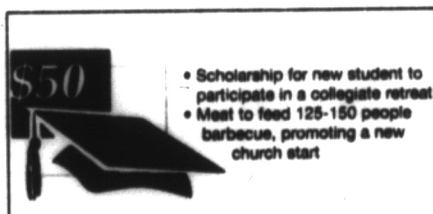
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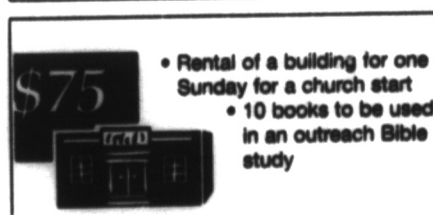
No. 11



- Newsletters and stamps for monthly mail outs to missionary prayer partners
- Wooden cross to mark the location for a worship service at a ski area



- Scholarship for new student to participate in a collegiate retreat
- Meat to feed 125-150 people barbecue, promoting a new church start



- Rental of a building for one Sunday for a church start
- 10 books to be used in an outreach Bible study



## NEVER PASS A PENNY

As we continue to collect pennies for the Memorial to the Missing filling a glass case that will hold 50 million pennies, it has been interesting to hear from a number of you who have changed or at least refocused your view of a penny. Each one of the pennies in the memorial represents one precious little baby. This year we passed the 50 million mark of abortions that have occurred since 1973 following the *Roe vs. Wade* decision of the Supreme Court. With no fanfare or national day of remembrance, we ignored this incredible milestone of human loss. Every penny is a person, and every person has tremendous value in the eyes of God. This Memorial to the Missing helps us visualize this unnoticed tragedy.

How much is a penny worth? It has certainly gone through many changes over the years, and not just the imprint that is on the copper, but the value of the one-cent piece itself. I am confident ole Ben Franklin was referring to a coin of far greater value than today's penny when he said, "A penny saved is a penny earned." Inflation, devaluation of coins, and even the change in the substance of the coin has made it of less and less value. The old, old pennies were 90% copper and 10% zinc. I am



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

told that today they are 90% zinc and 10% copper.

What can you buy with a penny? Like some of you, my first thought would probably be gum from one of those old gumball machines, but now the gum is worth more than a penny. In fact, for those of you who may have been out of circulation for a while, those penny gumball machines went to a nickel, and somewhere along the line they jumped up to a quarter. I suppose in the days ahead my grandchildren will probably come and ask for a dollar bill so they can get them a piece of gum.

What can you buy with a penny? I really can't think of anything. In a day when water can cost you one to three dollars a bottle, you can't even get a decent gulp with a penny. Somehow with the devaluation of coins there has also come the devaluation of life itself. In our country silently and invisibly with the decision of the Supreme Court that makes

abortion legal and covered with a shroud of medical technology that seems to provide moral approval, we have gone about taking one life at a time, and through whatever arguments you want to use our society has decided that those little persons are of no value.

It is interesting how we have lessened their worth, for they are no longer people. They are not even babies. We refer to them as "fetuses." Say what you will and call it what you want, the truth is that in the case of most abortions performed in our nation if a surgeon were to take the time to perform a careful operation and open the womb he would remove a developing child that anyone of us would be able to recognize as a small human being.

In collecting and giving our pennies to the Memorial to the Missing many of us have become penny conscious and person conscious. Every penny represents a person and so when walking along the side-

walk and you notice a penny on the ground, pause to pick it up and think about what one little small person could have become. After your purchase at the store, you receive change and sprinkled among the nickels and dimes there may be a penny or two. Stop and think of what great value a child has.

Your pennies are needed to help fill the glass case and complete the memorial. If you have collected pennies and have not been able to get them to Jackson, just call the Christian Action Commission, and they will help arrange to have someone pick them up. If you send dollar bills or a check, we will convert them to pennies. Our nation needs to see what 50 million looks like. Even now if you get an opportunity to come by the Baptist Building and give God a little of your time to stand at this memorial, you will be amazed at the enormity of what has taken place and is happening in our nation day by day. View the pennies and see the people — precious, productive, but now missing people.

God help us not only to stop destroying our children but also to move toward a high, heavenly view of the worth of a human being.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).



YOU CAN RESPOND  
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## African-American students attend annual retreat

"Let's give God a praise offering, amen?" Tobias Jackson of Rust College asked a room full of peers at the State Black Student Union (BSU) Retreat held Feb. 16-17 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. "Surely God is in the place," he continued as the crowd of nearly 200 students stood to their feet and applauded.

"This is a special opportunity designed by African-American students that is open to all college students. The annual weekend includes worship, inspiration, and a challenge to serve in missions and ministry on their campuses and beyond," said Weaver McCracken, director of collegiate ministry for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

According to McCracken, the State BSU Retreat has been going on for more than 50 years. BSU choirs, seminars, and the Mr. and Ms. BSU pageant helped to make this a well-attended student retreat among both white and black collegians this year.

The theme for the event, Pressing On For Christ, was based on Philippians 3:13-14. Dolphus Weary, executive director of Mission Mississippi, served as the keynote speaker. Mission Mississippi is a Jackson-based organization that promotes unity in the body of Christ across racial and denominational lines.

"This weekend is an opportunity for students from all over Mississippi to learn from each other, share their experiences, and touch one another's hearts," said Jessie Dawson of



UNITY IN CHRIST — Dolphus Weary, executive director of Mission Mississippi in Jackson, addresses participants at the annual Black Student Union Retreat at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. Mission Mississippi promotes unity in the body of Christ across racial and denominational lines. (Photo by Erica Harms)

Jackson, BSU state coordinator.

Ministry leaders within the state were present to recruit help. Robert Washington, new church plant pastor of the African-American congregation at Oak Forest Church, Jackson, and Herron Wilson, director of Indianola Delta

Missions, were on hand to talk to students about needs they can fill now and during the summer in these ministries.

Wilson indicated he talked with five students expressing interest in helping with their six-week summer Vacation Bible School program.

African-American BSU work sponsored by MBCB and supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program is active on the campuses of Jackson State University in Jackson; three campuses of Hinds Community College at Raymond, Utica, and Edwards; Rust College in Holly Springs; and Mississippi Valley State University in Itta Bena.

Additionally, African-American students are involved in all of the more than 30 programs of Baptist Student Union work on the campuses of Mississippi universities, colleges, community colleges, and junior college.

"Throughout the year, these students have outreach ministries both on campus and in the community. People need to know about Christ and about accepting Him as Savior. These young people have set aside time and are willing to share this with other people. God is working and we are getting to be a part of it," Dawson said.

For more information on the Black Student Union and Baptist Student Union programs in Mississippi, contact McCracken at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3299 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 299. E-mail: [wmccracken@mbcb.org](mailto:wmccracken@mbcb.org). Web site: [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org).

Correspondent Erica Harms and Weaver McCracken, collegiate ministry director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, authored this article.



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Deacon Ordination, Arbor Grove Church, Houston

1. **Arbor Grove Church, Houston**, ordained Scott Shempert as deacon Feb. 18. Shown, front, are Jerald Harmon, Hinton Shempert, Shempert, and pastor Jonathan Childress. Back row, Sonny Gann, David Bullock, Bill Clark, Dale Whitt, Jon Lancaster, Steve Eaton, Barry Martin, and Sammy Lovvorn.

2. The ladies of **First Church, Leakesville**, met in honor of Edwina Robinson Mar. 4. Robinson became Young People's Secretary for Mississippi wMu in 1933 and retired as executive secretary of the Mississippi wMu in 1971. Shown are the participants.

3. **Eureka Church, Sandhill**, recently elected and ordained deacons. Shown are Joe Lawrence, A. J. Stewart, Cecil Rhinewalt, and AMD Allen Stevens.

4. **Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association**, observed Baptist Men's Day Jan. 28. The Brotherhood chose pastor Robert E. Walker as "Man of the Year." Shown are Gary Kennedy and Walker.



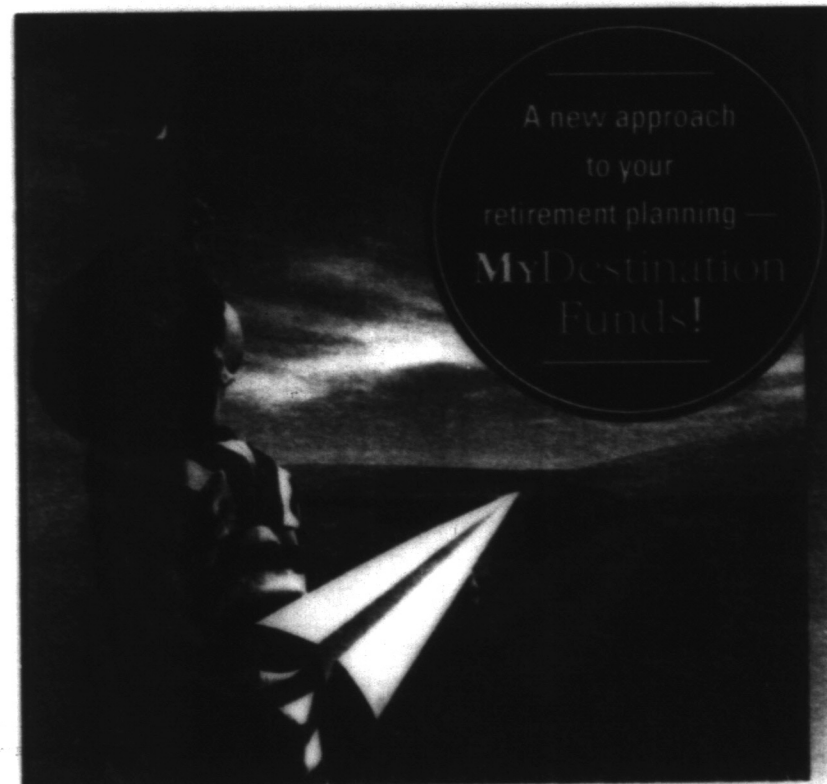
3. Deacon Ordinations, Eureka Church, Sandhill



2. Edwina Robinson Honored, First Church, Leakesville



4. Walker Honored, Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association



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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



5. Dill Lincensed to Ministry, First Church Myrick, Laurel



6. Lottie Moon, Calvary Church, Pascagoula



7. Deacon Ordinations, Union Church, Raleigh



8. Noteburning Ceremony, Calvary Church, Summit

5. **First Church Myrick, Laurel**, licensed Rory Dill to the ministry Mar. 4. Shown are pastor Jackie Spell and Dill. Dill is available for supply (601) 428-1289.

6. **Calvary Church, Pascagoula**, exceeded its Lottie Moon goal of \$3000. Shown are Robert Hinger, Wendy Hinger, Merle Ivy, and several RAs and GAs.

7. **Union Church, Raleigh**, ordained Hollis Blackwell, Mark Tullos, Joshua Currie, and Brantley Smith as deacons Jan. 14. Shown are Blackwell, Tullos, pastor Hayes, Currie, and Smith.

8. **Calvary Church, Summit**, celebrated a noteburning Jan. 28 for their new Sunday School rooms. Shown are Steve Lofton, Julian Lofton, pastor Ron West, Sheila Morgan, George Morgan, Jerolyn Price, Rebecca Lofton, and Pam Spiers.

9. **Union Church, Raleigh**, ordained Al Lott to the gospel ministry Jan. 7. Shown are pastor David Hayes and Lott.

10. The fifth grade students of **First Church, Gautier**, challenged the other children to reach a goal of a mile of pennies for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, which equals 84,480 pennies. On Mar. 4, the children presented their offering of over \$1100 in pennies and change, which helped the church meet its overall offering goal of \$16,000. Shown are the participants.

11. **Antioch Church, Brandon**, held a piano dedication service Jan. 28, with singing and piano playing by various members. Shown are Wendy Carter and Penny Carter.

12. **Goss Church, Columbia**, presented the Christmas musical Miracle on Main Street Dec. 10. Shown are the participants. Mark McArthur, pastor.

13. Lawrence Association will host the Area 8 wMu meeting May 5 at **Bethel Church, Monticello**, with registration and refreshments at 9:30 a.m. and program at 10. Donna Swartz, speaker. The project is the Mississippi River Ministry. For information on items to bring to the meeting for the project, or other information, call (601) 649-8114 or 736-2254.

14. **Cedar View Church, Olive Branch**, will host a community singing with Mike Franklin Mar. 17, 6 p.m.



9. Ordination, Union Church, Raleigh



10. Penny Collection, First Church, Gautier



11. Piano Dedication, Antioch Church, Brandon



12. Christmas Musical, Goss Church, Columbia



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



15. Welborn Licensed to Ministry, Corinth Church, Heidelberg



16. Skinner Licensing, East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia



17. Watts Recognized, Friendship Church, Brookhaven



## MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

15. **Corinth Church, Heidelberg**, licensed Shane Welborn to the ministry Mar. 4. Shown are pastor Bill Riley and Welborn.

16. **East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia**, recently licensed Mike Skinner to the ministry. Shown are pastor Mike Smitley, Glenda Skinner, Skinner, and Mark Cloyes.

17. **Friendship Church, Brookhaven**, recognized deacon Carroll A. Watts at his retire-

ment after serving 57 years as volunteer treasurer of the church. His wife Be Be served as assistant treasurer. Chad Yarborough, pastor.

18. **Palestine Church, Plantersville**, entered a float which won 3rd place in the Nettleton Christmas Parade. The float showed a nativity scene and a resurrection scene.

19. **Calvary Church, Waynesboro**, hosted Jones County Junior College's concert choir Feb. 25. Shown are the participants.

20. Student leaders from **First Church, Magee**, prepare to leave for a Leadership Retreat at Twin Lakes Friday, Feb. 16. Shown from left to right: Hayden Schaub, Ian Cowart, Garrett Graves, Brandon Johnston, Ashlee Zila, Allie Luckey, Maggie Williams, Lorin McAlpin, Devin Hart, Kaitlin Berch and Brittney Ainsworth.

21. **Fernwood Church, Gulfport**, will have Palm Sunday services Apr. 1, 11 a.m.; House of Prayer Apr. 2, 7 p.m.; Lord's Supper Apr. 5, 7 p.m.; Good Friday services Apr. 6, 7 p.m.; children's Easter egg hunt Apr. 7, 11 a.m.; and Easter services Apr. 8, 10:45 a.m.

22. **Ridglea Heights Church, Moss Point**, broke ground Mar. 4 on their new multipurpose facility. Shown are Martha Bishop (sitting), George McDonald, Violet McDonald, Thelma Dixon, Frank Dixon, Bill Dixon, and Jim Sciple. Steve Ciriot, pastor.

23. **Society Hill Church, Oakvale**, will host Calm Assurance Mar. 18, 6 p.m.

24. **Pleasant Grove Church, Wayne County, Laurel**, presented James Shoemake with a plaque for 60 years of service as a Sunday School teacher Jan. 28.

25. **Iuka Church, Iuka**, is sponsoring their 2007 Women's Conference Apr. 21, featuring Kay Faulkenberry of Pathway Ministries and the Iuka Church Praise Team. Cost is \$10; registration begins at 8 a.m. and includes breakfast and lunch. For more information, call (662) 423-5246 or visit [www.iukabaptistchurch.org](http://www.iukabaptistchurch.org).



18. Nettleton Christmas Parade, Palestine Church, Plantersville



19. JCJC Concert Choir, Calvary Church, Waynesboro



22. Groundbreaking, Ridglea Heights Church, Moss Point

## REVIVALS

**Beulah Church, Newton:** Revival, Mar. 18-21; Sun., 10:55 a.m., followed by a fellowship meal; Sun.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Mike Everett, speaker; Travis Watkins, music; Keith Ramage, pastor.

**North Winona Church, Winona:** Revival, Mar. 25-28; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Dale Walker, Van Buren, Ark., speaker; Rusty Fair, pastor.

**Philadelphia Church, Etta:** Revival, Apr. 18-21; Dale Gavatt, Memphis, speaker; Neil Hodge, Oxford, music; Bobby Irvin, pastor; for more information, call (662) 236-5315.

**Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth:** Revival, Mar. 25-27; Sun., 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m.; Phil Hoskins, Kingsport, Tenn., speaker; special singing each night; Kara Blackard, pastor.

## STAFF CHANGES

**First Church, Olive Branch**, has called James M. Stewart as senior pastor, who comes from Temple Church, Hattiesburg. He is a graduate of William Carey University and New Orleans Seminary. He began his ministry Mar. 4; his wife is named Janet and he has two college-aged children, Kyle and Kadi.

Joe Herndon has resigned as pastor of **Furrs Church, Pontotoc**, and is available for pastor, interim, or supply. He may be contacted at (662) 419-1933 or (662) 297-6610.



20. Student Leaders, First Church, Magee



## COLLEGE NEWS

1. William Carey University's Preview Day 2007 will be held Mar. 31 from 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. on the Hattiesburg campus. Designed for prospective students, Preview Day '07 offers students a chance to attend informative sessions about financial aid and admissions procedures, take campus tours, and attend a Block Party. Breakfast and registration begins at 9 a.m. in the Wilkes Dining Hall followed by welcome and information sessions in the Student Conference Center. Campus tours begin at 10:30 a.m. and the Block Party begins at 11:30 a.m. Students wishing to pre-register may do so at 12:30 p.m. An additional \$1,000 scholarship will be available to students who qualify for attending and registering on Mar. 31. Students should respond before Mar. 21 by calling (601) 318-6103, (800) 962-5991 ext. 103, or email [admissions@wmcarey.edu](mailto:admissions@wmcarey.edu). Students planning to register on Mar. 31 must send all admissions materials no later than Mar. 21. Admissions materials are to be mailed to William Carey University, 498 Tuscan Avenue WCU Box 13, Hattiesburg, MS. 39401.

2. Jan Grissom, a professional soprano who has sung at the Metropolitan Opera, will perform in concert Mar. 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus of William Carey University. Tickets are \$10 general admission and \$5 for students. They will be available at the door, or you may call in advance for more information to (601) 318-6175.

3. Memorial Hospital Auxiliary awarded \$15,000 in nursing scholarships to the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast, William Carey University on the Coast, Pearl River Community College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Jeff Davis, Jackson County and Perkinson Mar. 1. Shown are Janet Williams, professor of nursing and director of the nursing program at William Carey University's Gulfport Campus, and Mildred Fayard, Memorial Hospital Auxiliary Treasurer.



3. Williams and Fayard, WCU

## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004  
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PGKVJGT DA VJG DNQQF  
QH IQCVU CPF ECNXGU;  
DWV DA JKU QYP  
DNQQF JG GPGVTGF KP  
QPEG KPVQ VJG IQNA  
RNCEG, JCXKPI QDVCKPGF  
GVGTPCN TGFGORVKQP  
HQT WU.

JGDTGYU PKPG: VYGNXG

Clue: K = I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalm Forty-Three: Five.

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**LASALLE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION** is accepting resumes for the position of Ministry Coordinator (aka DOM) through May 1, 2007. Resumes may be sent to Randy Ray, 452 Fellowship Road, Trout, LA 71371 or email: [randyray@centurytel.net](mailto:randyray@centurytel.net).

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**FULL-TIME PASTOR NEEDED:** Send resume to First Baptist Church, Central, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 9676 Sullivan Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70818 or Fax (225) 261-6500. For more info, call (225) 261-3722.

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**CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH,** Pascagoula, Miss., is seeking a pastor for a growing church. Please send resumes with picture to: Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. 2278, Pascagoula, MS 39567 — Attention: Bill Pope.

**SPRINGDALE BAPTIST CHURCH** in Attala county is seeking a pastor, preferably bivocational. Please send resume to pastor search committee, 28110 Hwy 19 North Kosciusko, MS 39090.





# Practical Principles for Christian Living



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 3

## AIN'T IT A SHAME ...

By Jimmy Porter



... **WHEN** over 7 million people worldwide die annually from substance abuse — alcohol, illicit drugs and tobacco! Of this 7 million, illicit drugs are responsible for 3% of the deaths, alcohol for 26% of the deaths, and tobacco 71% of the deaths. It is also estimated that by 2020 smoking will cause 10 million deaths per year worldwide.

... **WHEN** smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in the United States! Approximately 48 million U.S. adults smoke cigarettes; half of these who continue will die from a smoking related disease. Tobacco costs \$50 billion annually in medical expenditures and \$50 billion in indirect costs each year.

... **WHEN** 22.4% of Mississippi high school students smoke! Nearly 8 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by Mississippi kids each year. It is estimated that 4,400 kids under 18 become new daily smokers every year. Also, if nationwide trends continue, approximately 5 million children today will die prematurely because they started smoking as adolescents.

... **WHEN** smoking causes 440,000 deaths annually! That extrapolates into 36,666 per month, 8,461

per week, 1,205 per day and 50 per hour. The sad part is that these are your relatives, co-workers, and friends. Smoking reduces the life of the average smoker by 12 years. The death rate for smokers is 2-3 times higher than non-smokers.

... **WHEN** 69,000 kids under 18 in Mississippi will ultimately die prematurely from smoking! Also, 400 to 750 individuals will die each year from secondhand smoke. Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, murders, and suicides combined.

... **WHEN** Mississippi's tobacco care-cost approaches approximately \$719 million a year! These costs account for \$264 million of our already overly stressed Medicaid budget. Residents of our state share this tax burden at the rate of \$561 per household.

... **WHEN** the tobacco industry spends an estimated \$200.4 million marketing their products in our state each year! The monies spent in Mississippi are a small part of \$15.4 billion spent nationwide. The industry knows that one-third of underage experimentation with smoking is attributable to tobacco company advertising!

... **WHEN** our state once ranked #4 in using tobacco settlement funds for smoking prevention but now ranks dead last — number 51! [Tobaccofreekids.org](http://Tobaccofreekids.org) states, "Mississippi, long a national leader and one of the few states that met CDC's recommendation, has

fallen to dead last because Governor Haley Barbour, a former tobacco lobbyist, has worked relentlessly to eliminate funding for the program."

... **WHEN** Mississippi has only an 18¢ cigarette tax, the second lowest in the nation! The average tax for the major tobacco states is 26¢ while the national average is \$1.00 on cigarettes. [Cancernetwork.com](http://Cancernetwork.com) states, "One of the most effective means of reducing the prevalence of tobacco use is by increasing federal and state excise tax rates. A 10% increase in the price of cigarettes can lead to a 4% reduction in the demand for cigarettes."

... **WHEN** something can be done, and it is not! Our legislators have introduced bills this year to raise cigarette taxes and lower grocery taxes. But the Senate bill with 27 co-authors died in the Senate Finance Committee chaired by Senator Tommy Robertson, who, (as of this writing) 'pocket vetoed' HB 247 which passed overwhelmingly in the House.

A majority of the Senate, 27 members, can pull the bill from his committee and pass it. No doubt the Governor will veto it, but it can be and should be overridden by the House and the Senate. This would be a win-win situation for our legislators and, most of all, the citizens of Mississippi. Why not call your senator and express your opinion on this?

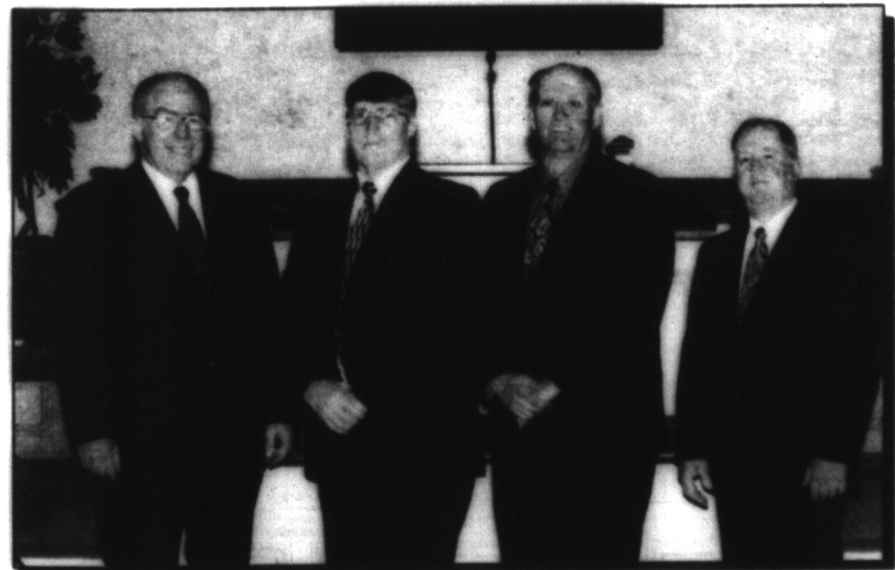
*Jimmy Porter is executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.*



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



26. DiscipleNow, First Church, West Point



27. Deacon Ordinations, DeKalb Church, DeKalb

26. West Point DiscipleNow '07 was held Feb. 23-25, with over 300 students and leaders participating. Shown are participants from **First Church, West Point**; Chuck Brister, minister to students; Dale Funderburg, pastor.

27. **DeKalb Church, DeKalb**, ordained three new deacons on Sun., Feb. 18. Shown from left to right: James A. Ruffin, pastor, with Mark Robertson, Jack Harrison and Joe VanDevender.

28. Members of **Walthall Church, Walthall**, Triple W Club (Senior Adults) having a great time at their "Sweetheart" banquet on Valentine's day, 2007.

29. **Zion Hill Church, Wesson**, ordained Robert McLendon Feb. 25. Shown, from left, are Tom McCormick, McLendon, Betty and Harold McLendon.

30. **Salem Church, Carthage**, will host a gospel singing Mar. 17, 6:30 p.m. as a VBS fundraiser. Free admission; a love offering will be taken. Music includes NewBorn, Kristye Horn, Madison Pike, Mickey Wooten, Bob Perron, Dale and Penny Rogers, and Katie Dana.



28. Senior Adults Sweetheart Banquet, Walthall Church, Walthall



29. Deacon Ordination, Zion Hill Church, Wesson



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

FEBRUARY 1-24

### MEMORIALS

Mr. James Kyle  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Danny Lafayette  
Mary Lynn, Cheryl Leigh  
& Ralph Perkins  
Maxine Lancaster  
Leaf River BC-Louis  
Travis Langford  
Mary Lynn, Cheryl Leigh  
& Ralph Perkins  
Alpha Langston  
Mary Lynn, Cheryl Leigh  
& Ralph Perkins  
Eva Latham  
Ms. Ann Dowdle  
Mrs. Roy Noble Lee  
Mrs. Joy B. Roberts  
David Nathan Legge  
Surviving Siblings of David Legge  
Mr. William E. "Bill" Lewis, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Benson  
Mr. & Mrs. Darrell Randall  
Mrs. Althea M. Partridge  
Gloria Lindsey  
Mrs. Ida Mae Bridges  
Mother of Frances Livingston  
Ms. Frances Livingston  
Mrs. Mary Livingston  
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Mary Lynn, Cheryl Leigh  
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Bill Lowe  
Mr. Ernest Eldridge  
Marguerite Malik  
Mike & Suzanne Allen & Family  
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Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth E. Lee  
Mrs. Annie Ruth Martin  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul D. Allen  
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Mrs. Mary M. McPhail  
Bertie Mayhan  
Dr. & Mrs. Harold Ward  
Bucky McAtee  
Mrs. Becky Winters  
Mrs. Annette McDaniels  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Beattie  
Mrs. Hazel McDonald  
Hurley Baptist Church  
Choir-Hurley  
Eunice McGhee  
Concord Baptist Church  
Ms. Neven McGhee  
Mel & Jan Later  
Mr. Charlie McKay  
Ms. Carmen E. Pittman & Carolyn

Mr. Thomas Bourne  
Rev. & Mrs. E. J. Stonaker  
Hazel McMurry  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
Mrs. Janie McMurry  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Carter  
Ralph McNair  
Carey & Suzanne Smith  
Mr. Harold McNeill  
Joyce Lasseter SSC, Forest BC  
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Martin E. Meade  
Mr. Hugh Meade  
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Mr. & Mrs. Larry Melton  
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# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Jesus Takes Care of Us

John 10:1-5,7-15,17-18

By Angie Boydston

A well-known insurance company has a slogan that says, "Like a good neighbor, we are there." This phrase is one we all know well enough to sing to ourselves in the comforting tones of the jingle. Don't we all want the comfort of knowing that when we have a need or something goes wrong, someone will be there to help us? How many of us worry about who will be there to help us in a time of need? What about when we get old; what if we lose a job; what if ...?

The Bible teaches us that there is someone who will always take care of us, regardless of our circumstances. In

fact, He has already laid down His life to protect and sustain us. He will never leave us on our own in times of need.

John 10: 1-5 shows us that just as a shepherd takes care of the defenseless sheep under his watch, Jesus cares for His flock. Shepherds such as the one described in these verses did not drive their herds; they led them simply using their voices. You'll notice that in verse 4, the sheep know their shepherd's call and willingly leave their pen to follow him. He probably even called them by name as he led the way.

Our good shepherd does the same thing. Jesus knows us by name, and He gently



Boydston

calls us as He leads. All that is required of us is to listen to His voice and tune out any others that would lead us astray. Voices of the world don't care who we are; in fact, they may be looking to harm us if we follow them. Verse 5 says the sheep would run away from the sound if they do not recognize the voice of the one calling to them.

Jesus continues his analogy in verses 7-10 as He likens Himself to the gate for the sheep's pen. He makes it clear that He is the only way to the refreshing pasture just as He is the only way to the path of salvation. Those sheep who find pasture will find satisfaction; those who find salvation in Jesus find the ultimate satisfaction — a life abundant.

We all want to know that we are safe and that we will find good times on our journey. Jesus

is the only one who can provide that for us. He came to give us life and give it to us abundantly. Often in times of trouble, however, we look to Jesus last. We try to find solutions, satisfaction, and salvation through other means while Jesus is just waiting to provide for our every need.

Verses 11 and following show just how far Jesus is willing to go to protect His sheep. The shepherd for a large flock might risk his life for his sheep, but the hired hand would not go so far. The hired man's investment in the flock wasn't nearly as great as their owner's was.

Jesus shows that as the Good Shepherd, He came to lay down His life for His sheep. His investment in His flock is greater than anyone else's could possibly be. He has not only a personal interest in His sheep, but an intimate relationship with them as well.

This relationship with His sheep is modeled on the loving and trusting relationship

between Jesus and His Father. He goes on to show that the Father loves Him for his willingness to lay down His life for us. Even more importantly, Jesus said He would take up His life again after He laid it down. The authority Jesus has over His own life is given away freely to ensure the safety of His people.

We want the security of knowing that whoever cares for us in our time of need will not be a "fair-weathered friend." Many times those we count on to watch out for us are nowhere to be found when things get too difficult. But Jesus promises that He will not desert us when we have a need. In fact, He willingly sacrificed Himself to protect and keep us. We can take comfort in our own jingle, "Like a good shepherd, Jesus is there." What more do we need?

Boydston is Preschool and Children's consultant in the Sunday School Dept., MBCB, and a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## Display a New Identity

1 Peter 2:1-12

By Ivan Parke

In the last three verses of the first chapter, the focus is the "Word of God" — "word" occurs three times (1:23, 25). The focus does not change in the first eight verses of the second chapter: a "therefore" (2:1) joins 1:23-25 and 2:1-8; "word" occurs twice (2:2, 8).

As a theme, "Word of God" links together two images (similes): "newborn babes" (2:1-3) and "living stones" (2:4-8). "Royal priesthood" (2:9-12), a third image (metaphor), concludes the first half of the second chapter. Each image depicts the Church.

### 1. Newborn Babes: Growing Christians (2:1-3)

The image "newborn babes" continues an earlier idea, "for you have been born again" (1:23). "Birth" and "baby" are inseparable.

The Word of God initiates conversion ("to be born again"). According to Peter, it is "imperishable seed" (1:23), containing eternal life (see also Jn. 6:38, 68).

The Word of God also nourishes converts. According to Peter, it is "pure milk" (2:2; see also Heb. 5:11-14).

Ingesting the Word is a command: "long for" or "crave" (NIV). It requires purging one's system: "putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander" (2:1; see also Ps. 119:11). The Greek verb, translated "to put away," means "rejecting." [a] "Malice" is any manifestation of wickedness. [b] "Guile" compares to "deceitfulness" whereas [c] "hypocrisy" is a form of deceptiveness (pretense). [d] "Envy" contradicts contentment. [e] "Slander" is derogatory speech, literally "speaking against" (see also 2:12;



Parke

3:16). Three of these behaviors appear on a list of vices in Romans 1: guile (v. 29), envy (v. 29), and slander (v. 30).

### 2. Living Stones: A Growing Church (2:4-8)

The image "living stones" parallels Paul's portrayal of the Church as a "building" that is alive (see 1 Cor. 3:9, 16-17; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:20-22). Peter contrasted the Church and the Temple in Jerusalem — i.e., the Second Temple, not the first Temple that Solomon built. [a] Two adjectives, "living" and "spiritual" (2:4-5), distinguish the Church. "Spiritual" refers to the Spirit of God. [b] The Temple, although beautiful (see Mk. 13:1-2; Jn. 2:19-20), did not have Jesus as its cornerstone.

The cornerstone formed the base of a corner. Therefore, it supported the weight of two exterior walls. A precise fit determined the stability of a structure.

Builders could not find a better cornerstone than Jesus: "chosen by God and precious to Him" (2:4-NIV; see also Lk. 9:35). Nevertheless, they did

not want Him, disobeying His Word. The Greek verb, translated "to reject" (2:4, 7), indicates disapproval after examination.

The Church ("spiritual house") accommodates a holy priesthood (see below). They offer "spiritual" sacrifices, not animal sacrifices (2:5; see also Rom. 12:1). Slaughtering animals became obsolete when Jesus sacrificed Himself (see Heb. 10:1-18).

Shortly after the martyrdom of Peter (see Jn. 21:18-19), the Romans destroyed the Second Temple (70 A.D.).

### 3. Royal Priesthood: A Serving Church (2:9-12)

The image "royal priesthood" is covenantal. At Mt. Sinai, God had invited former slaves to be His "own possession among all the peoples ... [to] be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6; see also Isa. 61:6). Two statements summarized the Sinaitic Covenant: "I will be your God" and "You will be my people" (see Lev. 26:12; Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 30:22; Hos. 1:10; 2:23).

Israel never fulfilled its mission, repeatedly breaking the covenant. Peter, a Jew, could have despaired indefinitely.

Instead, he expected the Church, being God's people (2:10), to complete the mission.

One family, Aaron and his male descendants, had been Israel's priests (see Ex. 28, especially vv. 1-5 and 40-43). No one else qualified. In contrast, in the Church, everyone qualifies to minister; God's priests "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" (2:9). Each one, on mission, has the same assignments: [a] proclaiming the wonders of God (2:9), [b] abstaining from fleshly lusts (2:11), and [c] keeping behavior honorable (2:12).

The combination of communication ("proclaiming") and character ("abstaining from" and "keeping") will hasten the conversion of "Gentiles," a synonym for pagans. Communication without character is ineffective. Character without communication is inadequate.

Scriptures cited are from the New American Standard unless otherwise indicated.

Parke is Associate Professor, Dept. of Christian Studies and Philosophy, MC, and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted.



Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to crop-

ping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

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# Russian minister taking hope to immigrants in Denver

Little Anatoliy Odnoralov often came home after school with a bloody nose, the result of just another day as a Christian at his school in the North Caucasus region of the old Soviet Union.

"Since early childhood, I knew the price for my convictions," he said in a recent interview.

Anatoliy was the third-born son of an ordinary shoemaker who, along with his wife, were faithful believers in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, they were believers living in a godless, atheistic nation dedicated to the persecution of Christians.

"The school where we were studying mocked us for our convictions and belief in God," recalls Anatoliy, a North American Mission Board (NAMB) church planting missionary ministering to the Russian and Jewish communities of Denver.

Although the Odnoralov children were excellent students in Soviet Russia, they were treated as second-class citizens by teachers and fellow students alike.

Continually harassed by the KGB and the Soviet Union's Committee on Religious Affairs, Odnoralov's father was constantly summoned by the authorities. Accused of the inappropriate education of his children, they would either threaten him with prison or with the taking of his beloved kids.

The constant KGB badgering led to a series of lost jobs and the Odnoralovs finally fell into poverty. Tragically, the senior Odnoralov would be killed in a

road accident in 1982, leaving teen-aged Anatoliy and his 12 siblings in the care of their widowed, asthma-afflicted mother.

Anatoliy, whose life story could be a TV miniseries, would suffer yet more almost unbearable religious persecution while serving in the Soviet Army. After surviving the army, he attended the Ukraine Bible Seminary, immigrated to the United States, married his wife Natasha, and attended the Oklahoma Bible Institute in Oklahoma City.

The Odnoralovs have four children.

Today, Odnoralov is one of more than 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. He's one of eight Southern Baptist missionaries highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer last week. The 2007 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$57 million, 100% of which is used for missionaries like Odnoralov.

In Denver, Odnoralov operates the International Center of Hope, a ministry focusing on the 60,000 Russian-speaking immigrants in the greater Denver area. Only three to four percent of them are believers, while 80% are Russian-speaking Jews.

He and his wife also work to plant new churches to reach Russian-speaking Jewish communities in Denver.

The chief project of the center is teaching English as a second language to as many as 100 Russian immigrants at a



STUDYING THE WORD • North American Mission Board missionary Anatoliy Odnoralov (far left) and head of the Hope International Cultural Center in Denver, shares the Gospel with Russian immigrants at a local retirement apartment complex. (NAMB photo by John K. Swain)

time. The center also offers computer, music, art, Russian history, and Hebrew language classes. All of the classes are offered at a nominal charge.

In addition, the center sponsors home Bible studies for Russian-speaking people. Odnoralov says they prefer studying the Bible in private homes rather than in local churches.

"It's very important that people want to come to us, of their

own free will," he said. "We want to establish relationships with them. We also have a big youth group, and we have summer camps to attract kids who do not know Jesus. We see kids accept the Messiah, and they pass on the Good News to their friends and family members."

By forming relationships, Odnoralov said the Russian people can observe how Christians live.

"We are open to them. They see our everyday lives. They see our households. We are not afraid to show them how we live, so we have mutual understanding and then they open up to the Gospel. We see families on the edge of divorce. We see people who are depressed, and then we see families restored and relationships between parents and kids restored," said Odnoralov.

## Michigan missionary delighted to serve in outdoor paradise

Evangelistic deer hunts. Christian fish fries. Wild game dinners at church. North American missionary (NAMB) Ken Wilson has a lot of tools in his Gospel-sharing tool box to win people to Christ amid the thick woods and crystal-clear lakes of northern Michigan.

"Well, our motto is whatever it takes, we get 'em any way we can," says Wilson. While he actually was referring to deer as he stealthily walked through the woods with his bow, dressed head-to-toe in camouflage gear — he uses the same strategy for winning souls for Jesus.

As an associational missionary for the Northwest Association also supported by the North American Mission Board, Ken Wilson, the fanatical outdoorsman, knows he lives in a hunting and fishing paradise.

"I don't think God could have called me to a better place than northern Michigan," he said, "because outdoor sports are huge up here. We have hunting ministries. The opening day of deer season is a local holiday."

Wilson said he loves to hunt and fish with locals and the many tourists who visit the area because it gives him an

opportunity to talk to them in their own language and then minister to them.

"We'll have dozens of fish fries going on throughout the summer and fall, with several hundred people attending," Wilson said. "We take these and make them evangelistic events. We have wild game dinners with speakers, myself or outsiders, sharing the Gospel with hundreds more."

"We even do evangelistic deer hunts, but we invite at least one lost person to go on every hunt, and every evening during the hunt, we have devotions, share the Gospel, and pray that lost hunters come to know Jesus."

Even a hunting and fishing paradise has its dark side, according to Wilson, who came to Mesick from southern Illinois in 2003. Less than half of one percent of the northern Michigan population are Southern Baptists. Fifty towns of 3,000 or more in the region are without a single Southern Baptist church. Many northern Michigan towns have a staggering "lost" population of 70-80%, according to Wilson.

Within the Northwest Association, there are only 15 churches and missions, and these



OUTDOORS MINISTRY — Southern Baptist resort missionary Ken Wilson (left) uses the northern Michigan outdoors to share Christ with locals and tourists alike. He's shown here drawing a bow while talking to friend Dave Robb about deer-hunting in the area. (NAMB photo by Michael Shead)

congregations have an average weekly attendance of only 30-something people each Sunday.

Wilson and his wife Cindy are only two of more than 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. He's one of only eight Southern

Baptist missionaries highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer last week. The 2007 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$57 million, 100% of which is used for missionaries like the Wilsons.

With the Northwest Association based in Mesick, Wilson today serves 10 counties in northern Michigan.

Traditionally rural, the 10-county area is growing by 15% annually. Leelanau County and Leelanau Peninsula are growing at a rate of 35% each year — the fastest growing area of the association.

"We have some counties with no Southern Baptist Convention churches," he said. "We have fast-growing areas like Harbor Springs in the Petoskey area with not a single Baptist church. We have many church-planting needs. We need some partner churches to come up here and help us."

Wilson said Mackinac (pronounced "Mackinaw") City, where tourism thrives in the summer, needs a church plant badly. In the summer, Mackinac grows to 10,000 people or more but during the winter, it reverts to a ghost town.

"It's a beautiful area and there are several things we could do in Mackinac City because of the tourism, but first we need to reach the indigenous people of Mackinac, those who live there year-round. If we could plant a church in Mackinac, we would have a world-impacting church, because many of the tourists who come to Mackinac Island and Mackinac City are from foreign countries."